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# Lincoln log cabin

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## THE PARK

Lincoln Log Cabin State Park, south of Charleston off Rt. 130, was the last home of Abraham Lincoln's father and stepmother, Thomas and Sarah Bush Lincoln. The 86-acre park, with a picturesque split rail fence along its borders, has a shady picnic area and a conservation exhibit in addition to the historic cabin and its surroundings.

## HISTORY

**Migration to Illinois:** Hardship attended the Lincoln family prior to their settling in Coles County. Thomas Lincoln, working as a carpenter and farmer, met with indifferent success in his attempts to earn a living in Kentucky because of land title difficulties. In 1816 he moved to Indiana where his wife, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, died in 1818 during an epidemic of the "milk sickness." Thomas Lincoln married Sarah Bush Johnston in 1819 and lived until 1830 in Indiana. At the encouragement of John Hanks, Lincoln sold his holdings and set out for Illinois and a fresh start.

The ill luck which had dogged Thomas Lincoln and his kin, however, followed them in 1830 to their first Illinois home, southwest of Decatur, now the Lincoln Trail Homestead State Park. After a miserable winter marooned in a crude cabin by six feet of snow, Thomas Lincoln, disgusted with Illinois, started back to Indiana in the spring of 1831. En route, he stopped in Coles County where he was persuaded to settle at Buck Grove, eight miles northwest of the present Lincoln Log Cabin State Park, and gave Illinois another chance.

**Settled Down:** Thomas Lincoln moved in 1834 to a farm a half mile southwest of Lerna and then twice again in 1837. His last move in that year brought him to an 80-acre farm at Goose Nest Prairie, site of the present Lincoln Log Cabin State Park. In 1840 Thomas Lincoln added



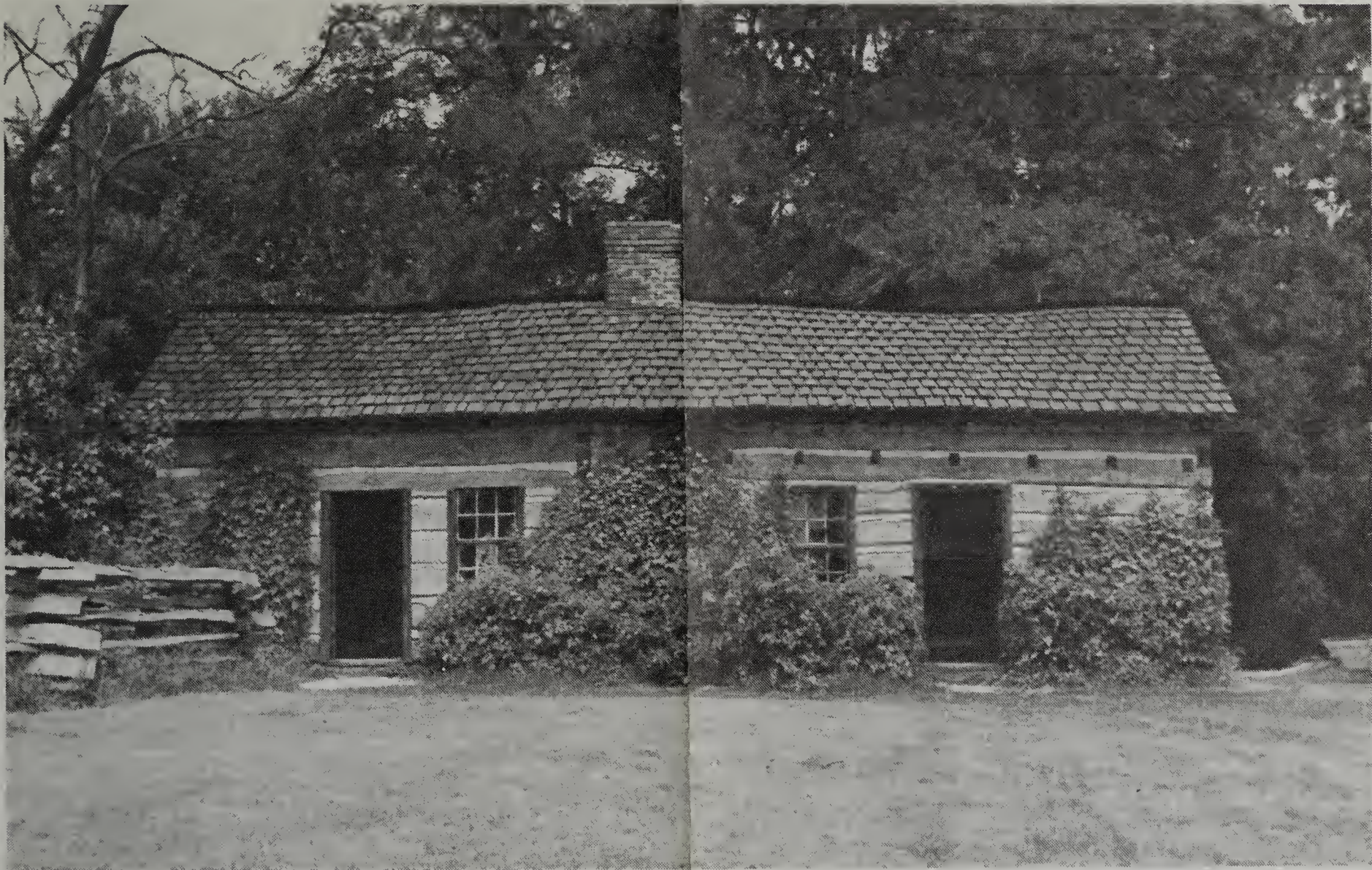
another 40 acres. Things here didn't progress well either and he had to occasionally call on his son for help. Abe Lincoln always responded and in 1841 eased his parents' distress by paying them \$200 for the east 40 acres of the 120-acre farm, allowing them to retain it as a life estate. After Thomas Lincoln's death in 1851, Lincoln refused to sell his interest and retained it for the use of his stepmother. Mrs. Lincoln remained on the farm until her death in 1869. John J. Hall, who had purchased the west 80-acres in 1851, acquired title to the remainder in 1888 by reason of 20 years of undisputed possession. Thomas Lincoln was a poor farmer, typical of his time, moving westward searching for a better place.

**Cabin Reconstructed:** The cabin which originally housed the Lincolns was sent to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1892 and was to

have been returned to Coles County for reassembly after the fair. Instead it disappeared. When the state, after acquiring the site in 1929, set about reconstructing the cabin, great care was used to locate its exact position. Existing photographs and affidavits of old settlers were used to provide the original details. The two room cabin has artifacts and furniture of the Thomas Lincoln period. An ash-hopper for making lye, long wedges for splitting rails and an ox-yoke add charm to the cabin setting.

**NEARBY INTERESTS**

**Moore Home:** Near the site of the cabin in the former village of Farmington is the Moore Home, owned by the state. Lincoln ate here with





his stepmother and her daughter, Mrs. Matilda Moore, before leaving for his inauguration in Washington in 1861.

**Shiloh Cemetery:** When President-elect Lincoln visited his stepmother at the Moore Home in 1861, they went together to the old Shiloh Cemetery and to the grave of his father, Thomas Lincoln. At that time, it has been told, he found a white oak board and with a saw and axe he made two markers, one for the head and the other for the foot of his father's grave. He then whittled the initials "T.L." on the headboard and cleared off the mound and surroundings and set the tomb markers. These markers were stolen by relic hunters and the grave was unmarked until a white marble stone was set in 1880. Later it was replaced with a larger stone for Thomas and Sarah Bush Lincoln, with an ornamental fence enclosure.

## FACILITIES

**Picnicking:** There is a shaded picnic area with tables, stoves and drinking water. A shelter house and playground equipment are available, along with a comfort station.

**Camping:** Limited camping is provided for both trailers and tents. Each space has its own picnic table and stove.

**Conservation:** A 30-acre plot in the park is designated as a conservation exhibit. The Department of Conservation, the Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service cooperate with the Coles County Soil Conservation District in this educational project.

The exhibit is open to the public at all times and is frequently used by schools in the area for a demonstration of conservation principles. Included are a multiflora rose fence, a farm pond, terraces, waterways, waterways structures, strip cropping, pasture seeding, a sod flume, stream bank cover, a strip of prairie grasses and forest trees.

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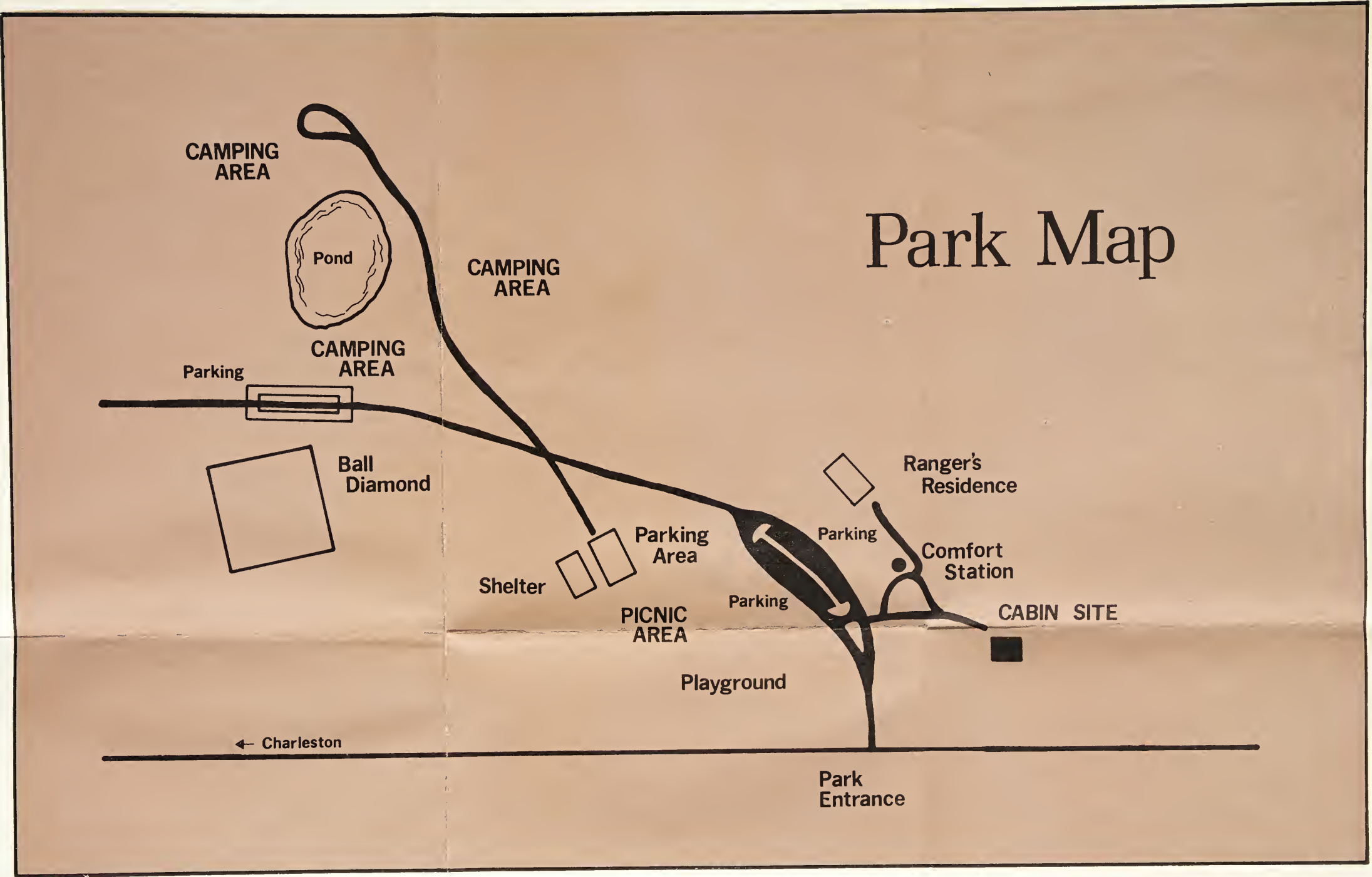
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FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

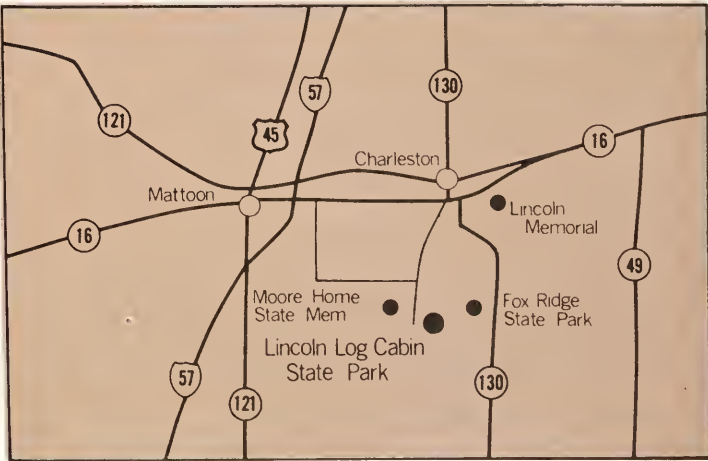
Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous State Park and Memorials are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features

of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state parks are open the year round. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

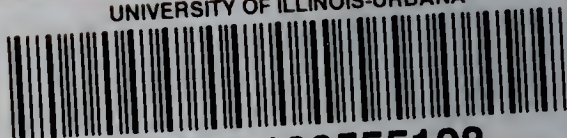
For further information concerning Illinois State Parks and Memorials write to the Division of Education, Department of Conservation, State Office Building, Springfield, Illinois, 62706.



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